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tant to the Vedantist that to him the simpler and purely scientific view seems irreligious and infidel. It was Buddha who proved to the world that a religion, yea, a very devout and stern religion, can be built up upon the most radical foundation. And why? Because the real self is as important as the shadowy metaphysical self, and if the atman is treated as an eternal unit, as in Vedantism, it may serve as a symbol of the character of a man, as his mind, his spirit, his heart, or his soul, and in this sense Buddha teaches his disciples to rid themselves of their impurities as a silversmith blows off the impurities from the silver when preparing it for his furnace (Dhammapada, 239).

In the original, Buddha here uses the very term atman, not of the metaphysical soul-self, but of the actual self, the personality of his disciple. In practical questions, both the believer in a metaphysical soul and the philosopher of the anatman lay down the same moral maxims, but in theoretical explanations, we have the two views in contradictory opposition, the rigorously scientific view and the artistic vision of an attractive but hazy mysticism.

EDITOR.

WHAT IS INTUITION?

What *is* intuition?

The dictionaries define the word as follows:

- a. "A looking upon; a seeing either with the physical eye, or with the 'eye of the mind.'"
- b. "Direct or immediate knowing; truths known by intuition are the original premises from which all others are inferred; intellectual intuition is applied to mystical vision; innate conceptions of right and wrong."
- c. "Any object or truth discerned by direct cognition; a truth that cannot be acquired by, but is assumed in, experience."
- d. "Pure untaught knowledge."
- e. "The term intuition will be taken as signifying a cognition not determined by a previous cognition of the same object, and, therefore, so determined by something out of the consciousness."

- f. "Comprehension of ideas independently of ratiocination; innate or instinctive knowledge."

But these definitions are not, after all, very illuminating; they give no clear idea as to what intuition *is*. They create a certain inference: we seem to see in intuition a remote influence through which the attitude or the conduct of the individual is influenced. This influence appears to be highly subtle, having an apparent origin either in a higher plane of the human mind or in a plane higher than that of the human mind; it appears to be either ultrahuman or suprahuman. And our association with the word, and our experience with the phenomena of intuition have been such that we are ready to accept intuition at just this vague and mysterious valuation. But now are we right in so accepting it? My answer to that question is, No.

I look upon intuition as nothing more than a product of normal brain activity; there is nothing ultrahuman or suprahuman about it. I take it to be just reflex cerebration.

The grey cells of the human brain possess a function which is peculiar to those cells; and this function, which no other cell possesses, we name self-consciousness. But, in addition to this, they possess another form of consciousness, namely, reflex. In self-consciousness the action of the cells is directed from within, whether the action results in thought or in the direction of a muscle. In reflex consciousness action can be aroused only through external stimuli. Reflex consciousness is the primal form of consciousness, for the primitive brain, in the lower orders of evolution, was made up only of reflex centers. As these centers evolved, as the brain increased in size and the area of the cortex increased, the new self-consciousness became associated with the old reflex consciousness. As the animal developed he became more and more aware of what he was doing; his higher centers took command. But at first these higher centers were little better than the others. They had developed through the lower, and, because of this, their mode of action was the same; they were only reflex centers, even though they were thought centers. The animal began to think, but his train of thought could be started only through an outside circumstance. His thought lacked value for the reason that he was, as yet, weak in the two essentials to good thought: memory and experience. As time went on, continued use of the new centers developed their function. Experience became wider, and memory grew stronger; and, as

memory developed, self-consciousness came into being. Self-consciousness was now supreme, for it was through this only that thought could be directed and regulated. Without self-consciousness thought would be only reflex thought, automatic thought, thought not controlled by the individual.

Of the two forms reflex thought is the older; it is, in fact, the first form of thought, basic thought, and it will, therefore, always exert its influence upon the cerebral cells. And even though self-conscious thought has become the dominant influence in the cerebral cortex, reflex thought still has a place there. It has existed as long as the brain has existed, for perhaps a million years, and its influence is going to persist for an indefinite period, perhaps as long as the brain of man endures.

We find then that the higher centers have reflex action just as the pure reflex centers have; the one is as easily excited to action by an external stimulus as is the other. But there is this difference between the two: Whereas pure reflex action is non-conscious action, this thought-reflex may be either non-conscious or conscious; the individual may or may not know what his thought cells are doing. These cells were created to act in a certain direction, and they always act in that direction, whether controlled or uncontrolled. *They do not need the direction of the individual in order to act, although they act better when so directed.* Thought can go on without the participation of the individual. The cells having been developed for the purpose of thought, and having performed that function for countless centuries, cannot avoid the thought-reaction when excited by the proper stimulus. The action has become a "habit-action," and through force of habit the cells think, even before the individual is aware. The fact that thought goes on in our dreams will prove this.

Intuition, then, is reflex thought; it is habit-action of the thought-cells, non-conscious action. The period of this non-conscious action is usually very short: the cells perform this non-conscious action, and then the individual becomes aware of the action. But that which he perceives is, not the action itself, but the result of the action. He perceives this result, and, not knowing that his own cells have evolved that result, he calls it "intuition," that is, a supernatural admonition. It does no harm to call this thing intuition; but it is wrong to give it that exalted value. It is merely reflex thought, without the value even of self-conscious thought.

The value of thought depends upon two things: the extent of the individual experience, and the degree of the individual self-consciousness. If a person has had a wide experience of a subject under discussion, and if he has been trained to think, if he knows how to use his experience, then his thought is going to be of value. His thought *must* be guided by his self-consciousness. Now reflex thought is not so guided. Cell action, whether conscious or non-conscious, is determined by cell experience; but if the action is outside of the individual consciousness it lacks the essential attribute of real thought. At its best it is nothing more than half-thought. It is true that this attempt at thought may happen to move in the right direction, but it is only chance if it does; it may as easily move in the wrong direction. If it goes right we call it intuition; if it does not go right we say that we guessed wrong. And so, after all, in what way is intuition superior to a mere guess?

In conclusion let us again go over the definitions at the head of this article. It may be that now they will appear to us in a different light.

Definition *a*. "A looking upon; a seeing either with the physical eye, or with the 'eye of the mind.'"

This comes the nearest of any of the definitions to telling us what intuition is, but it fails to completely enlighten us. Looking upon an object with the "physical eye" may bring intuition into action, but what is the action? So, also, may looking upon an object with the "eye of the mind," but, again, what is the action? We find that what these acts of looking do is to excite thought about the object looked at. If the object is something new to the observer the individual stores up in his memory the new image-impulses which come to him from it; if it is an object with which he already is familiar it recalls to his consciousness the images which former "lookings" have stored there. If now, while we look upon the object, we fancy that we have some subtle knowledge of it, we call that intuition, and we imagine vain things about the high origin of this knowledge. But if we analyze the matter, if we look into our thought-cells, do we find anything in those cells behind those thought-images? Is there anything in the thought-cells that is above thought? The answer to that question will determine the status of intuition.

Definition *b*. "Direct or immediate knowing; truths known by intuition are the original premises from which all others are inferred; intellectual intuition is applied to mystical vision; innate conceptions of right and wrong."

What is meant by the above expressions? What is "direct knowing"? Where are the "original premises"? What is "mystical vision"? What are "innate conceptions"? Are these anything more, in our present light, than figures of speech? The words "direct," "original," "mystical," "innate," have no right to be used here. The use of the words merely elevates the subject to the realm of the supernatural, where it has no place. Being just a process of human thought, it cannot go above thought.

Definition *c*. "Any object or truth discerned by direct cognition; a truth that cannot be acquired by, but is assumed in, experience."

Here we find the word "direct" again, and we voice the same objection to it. There is no such thing as "direct cognition" as applied to the human brain; also, there can be no such thing in the cerebral cells as a truth *not* acquired by experience.

Definition *d*. "Pure untaught knowledge."

I take this to mean knowledge not acquired through experience. There can be no such knowledge in the human brain. If such knowledge were possible some of us would never need to study; but even the genius has to do that.

Definition *e*. "The term intuition will be taken as signifying a cognition not determined by a previous cognition of the same object, and therefore so determined by something out of the consciousness."

The process of intuition *does* take place "out of the consciousness"; but *there must be* a "previous cognition," else there can be no intuition. Intuition, like thought, depends upon experience, upon knowledge.

Definition *f*. "Comprehension of ideas independently of ratiocination; innate or instinctive knowledge."

Both of these may be denied. There can be neither "comprehension of ideas independently of ratiocination," nor "innate or

intuitive knowledge" in the cells of the human brain. Such action, to exist, must be above the human, must be supernatural; but we have no evidence that it is. If it were a superhuman impulse for the direction of human conduct it would be more in evidence, *it would be more certain*, it would be more constant. The intuition with which we are acquainted gives merely an occasional manifestation, and that manifestation is colored by the individuality of the person through whom it comes. In short, intuition shows no higher origin than does thought. It is nothing more than cerebration, reflex cerebration, and holds no value beyond that. Its value is no greater than the experience of the individual through whom it is manifested, or that is given to it by chance.

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CROCE'S USE OF THE WORD "INTUITION."

Benedetto Croce is a leading Italian scholar whose theory of esthetics forms an essential feature of his philosophy. One difficulty in following his thought lies in the significance of his fundamental terms, among which the idea of "intuition" presents unusual difficulties. Croce's conception of intuition is apparently different from that of Kant and also from its interpretation in mystical writings. In Kantian literature the word "intuition" translates the German term *Anschauung*, which denotes a state of mind in which an object is presented to the vision of the eye. It is the object as it is perceived by the sense of vision.

Anschauung or intuition may be either the function of beholding or the thing beheld which is the product of the function, the actual process as we feel it, as it works out and mirrors the sense impressions received in the pictures that appear before our eye. These pictures are chemical modifications of our retina, but in the psychical interpretation which they receive they lie outside of us as things or objects of the surrounding world. This is *Anschauung* in the Kantian sense.

The term *Anschauung* created a difficulty for the translators of Kant, but they cut the Gordian knot by translating the word by the corresponding Latin term *intuitio*. The unfortunate feature of this word is that it has served as a mystical description of the visions of our imagination,—not the actual sight of our eye but visionary